

Message Text

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15

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NIC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 SAJ-01 AID-20 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-02

TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01

SCI-06 CU-04 NSF-04 DRC-01 /182 W

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P R 170845Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5531

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USMISSION BERLIN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CZ, US

SUBJ: GOVERNMENT STATEMENT ON U.S.-CZECHOSLOVAK RELATIONS

1. IN YEAR-END REPORT TO FEDERAL ASSEMBLY DECEMBER 13, CZECHOSLOVAK PREMIER STROUGAL INCLUDED DETAILED AND OPTIMISTIC REPORT ON US-CZECHOSLOVAK RELATIONS, DESCRIBING IMPROVEMENT IN BILATERAL RELATIONS BEGINNING WITH FORMER SECRETARY ROGERS' VISIT TO CSSR IN JULY. HE SAID THAT JULY SIGNING OF CONSULAR CONVENTION HAS BEEN "THE MOST SIGNIFICANT STEP SO FAR IN THE CURRENT PROCESS OF GRADUAL NORMALIZATION OF OUR RELATIONS WITH THE U.S."

2. CONCERNING CLAIMS NEGOTIATIONS STROUGAL SAID THAT "DESPITE
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THE FACT THAT DIFFICULTIES CONTINUE, WE BELIEVE THAT WE SHALL SUCCEED

IN CONCLUDING A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE AGREEMENT." HE ADDED LATER THAT CZECHOSLOVAKIA WAS PREPARING FOR COMMERCIAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH U.S. WHICH WOULD LEAD TO RETURN TO MFN TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

3. STROUGAL ALSO SAID THAT NEGOTIATIONS ON SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL COOPERATION HAD BEGUN THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS IN LATE OCTOBER AS AGREED BY MINISTERS.

4. STROUGAL'S COMMENTS REPRESENT MOST POSITIVE AND OPTIMISTIC CZECHOSLOVAK GOVERNMENT STATEMENT ABOUT OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS SINCE SECRETARY ROGERS' VISIT HERE IN JULY. WHILE STROUGAL DID NOTE DIFFICULTIES IN CLAIMS NEGOTIATIONS, HE DID NOT DWELL ON DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OUR POSITIONS WHICH COULD BLOCK AGREEMENT OR ON HURDLES TO BE CROSSED BEFORE CZECHOSLOVAKIA RECEIVES MFN. STROUGAL SPECIFICALLY SEPARATED MFN FROM CLAIMS TALKS AND DID NOT MENTION RETURN OF CZECH GOLD, THEREBY PASSING AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRESS AN ISSUE UNDERSTOOD AND NOT QUESTIONED BY CZECHOSLOVAK CITIZENS. SHERER

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